

NEW ENGLAND VILLAGE

Most New England settlers lived on the Atlantic Coast and earned their living chiefly as fishermen, shipbuilders, or seagoing traders. The rocky soil was not suitable for large farms, but New England had plenty of fine shipbuilding timber, and some of the best fishing waters in the world.

shiploads of settlers to the colony and gave them some land free. After the colony had been developed, the promoters could charge high prices for the remaining land.

Early Settlements

The English made an unsuccessful attempt to establish a colony in North America in 1585. That year, a group sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh started a settlement on Roanoke Island, off the coast of what is now North Carolina. The settlers soon returned to England, and another group landed in 1587. This group disappeared mysteriously, and no one knows what happened to them (see **LOST COLONY**).

In 1606, a trading firm called the Virginia Company was granted a colonizing charter by King James. Two colonies were planned. One was to be located somewhere between present-day New York and the Carolinas. The other was to be someplace between New York and Newfoundland. The Virginia Company's plans led to the establishment of Jamestown and Plymouth. The experiences in these colonies served as a guide for future English colonization in America.

Jamestown was the first permanent English colony in America. The first colonists—all men or boys—landed on Jamestown Island on May 14, 1607. They set out to build a fortified outpost from which they could explore Virginia and trade with the Indians.

The Jamestown settlers expected to find gold and other treasures in the wilderness, but they found none. There was nothing they could send back to England for sale except lumber products. About 1612, the colonists learned how to raise and cure tobacco. The export of tobacco helped save the colony by providing a way for the colonists to support themselves.

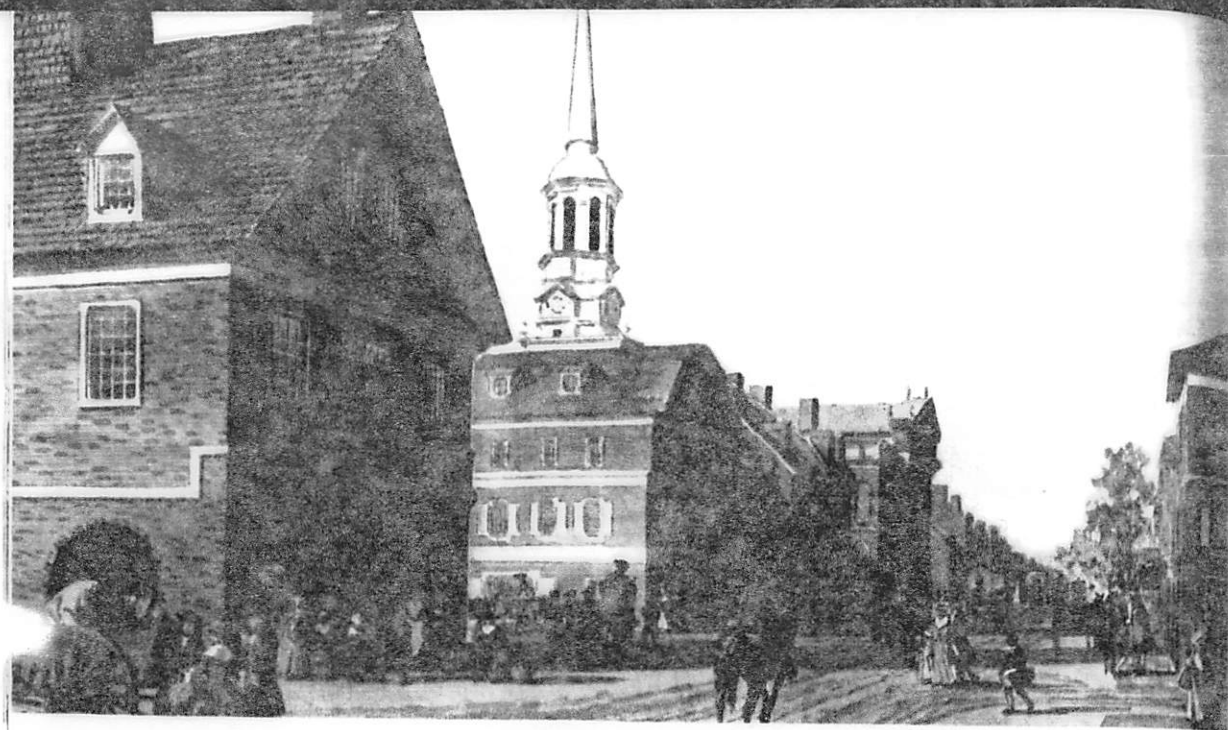
Many serious difficulties almost ruined the settlement. The region was swampy and unhealthful. During the first year, about two-thirds of the settlers died of disease or starvation. More settlers were sent to Jamestown, but food was still scarce. So many died in 1609 that the year became known as the colony's "starving time."

Indian attacks added to the difficulties in founding the colony. The attacks stopped after the settlers signed a treaty in 1614 with Chief Powhatan, whose daughter Pocahontas had married John Rolfe. But the Indians broke the treaty after Powhatan's death in 1618. They killed many settlers in a massacre in 1622.

In spite of many tragedies and hard times, Jamestown survived. Farmers and their families replaced the explorers and traders. The Virginia Company also sent young women to Jamestown to marry the bachelors of the colony. There were two chief reasons for the survival of the Jamestown colony. First, the colonists learned how to produce their own food and supplies. Second, family life developed after women settled in the colony. For the story of the Jamestown settlement, see **JAMESTOWN; VIRGINIA (History)**.

Plymouth was the second permanent English settlement in America. A group of Pilgrims—men, women, and children—established the colony in 1620 on the rocky southeastern shore of what is now Massachusetts. The Plymouth colonists called themselves Pilgrims because of their wanderings in search of religious freedom. The Pilgrims were farmers and skilled workmen. They wanted to raise their families in a place where they could live according to their religious beliefs. These beliefs required the Pilgrims to work hard and live simply.

Although the Pilgrims were quite different from the Jamestown settlers, they had many similar problems.



PHILADELPHIA MARKET

Certain days of each week were declared "market days" in every colonial city. On those days, the farmers of the surrounding countryside brought fresh meats, fruits, and vegetables to be sold in the city's special market areas. This painting was adapted from a print made in the late 1700's.

Their "starving time" came during the first winter, just after they landed in the New World. Only about half the 99 Plymouth settlers survived the bitter winter.

The Pilgrims were fortunate in their relations with the Indians of the region. Soon after the Pilgrims landed, they signed a friendship treaty with the Indians which lasted 50 years. They also had the help of a friendly Indian named Squanto. He taught them how to raise corn, and showed them the best fishing areas. See SQUANTO.

The story of how the Pilgrims established Plymouth Colony has become one of the most famous chapters of American history. This story is often told to show how courage and hard work can triumph over tremendous difficulties. The Pilgrims did not change their simple way of life as their colony developed. As a result, Plymouth never became prosperous. In 1691, it became part of the large colony of Massachusetts. For the story of how the Pilgrims developed their colony, see PLYMOUTH COLONY. See also PILGRIM.

Development of the Colonies

After English colonists had settled Jamestown and Plymouth, large areas of the Atlantic seacoast were colonized. The later colonists suffered hardships, but they had learned from the first settlers. There were no more "starving times" in colonial America.

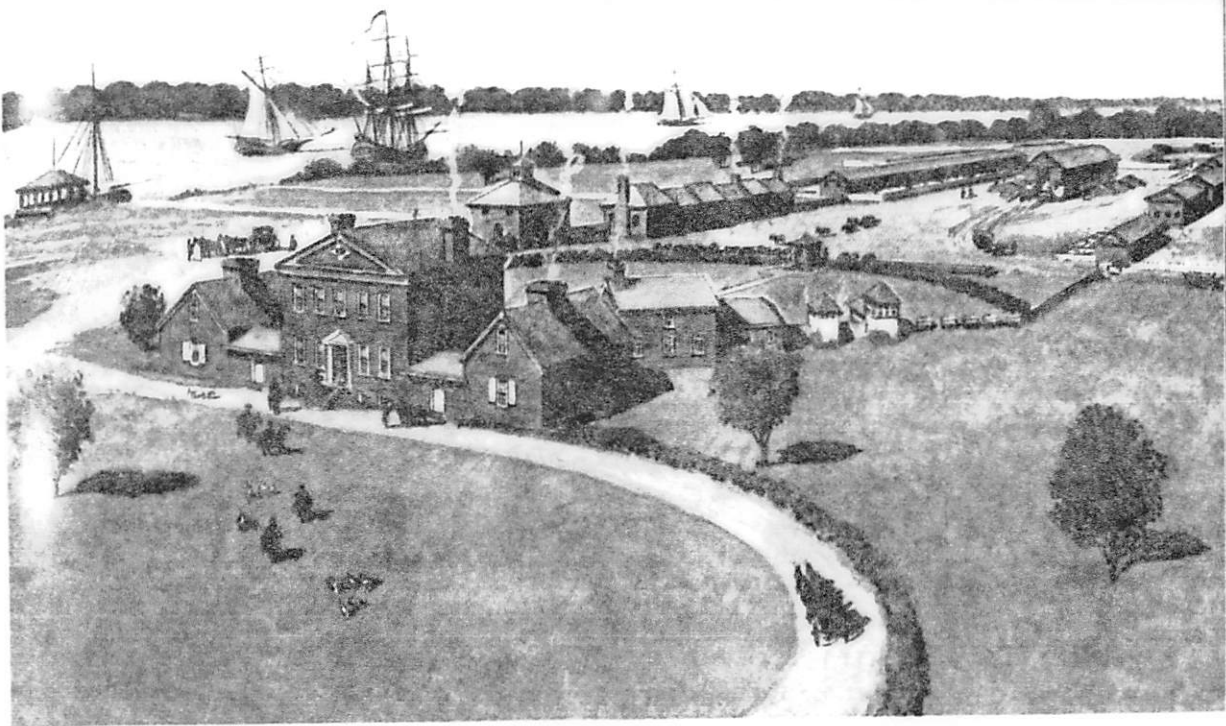
timber and some of the best fishing waters in the world.

The Middle Colonies were Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania. Their climate favored large farms, where wheat and other grains were grown.

The Southern Colonies were Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. The warm climate and rich soil of the south were fine for growing tobacco and rice. Life in the Southern Colonies developed chiefly on plantations.

Types of Colonies. No two colonies began or developed in exactly the same way. But there were three major types of American colonies: (1) *royal*, (2) *proprietary*, and (3) *corporate*. A royal colony was under the direct control of the king. A proprietary colony was controlled by an individual—the proprietor—under a grant from the king. A corporate colony was operated, as a rule, under a charter obtained from the king by a company's stockholders.

All the 13 English colonies were founded either as proprietary or corporate colonies. By the time the Revolutionary War began in 1775, eight of the colonies had become royal colonies—Georgia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Three colonies—Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania—were proprietary. The other two—Connecticut and Rhode Island—may



SOUTHERN PLANTATION

A colonial planter built his mansion to resemble a fine English country house. Behind the mansion were a kitchen, smokehouse, coach house, barns, and slaves' cabins. Most plantations were on a bay or river and had a wharf where their products could be loaded on ships.

large groups of Germans and Scotch-Irish. Like many of the early settlers, these groups had fled hard times and religious persecution in Europe. The Germans became known as the best farmers among the colonists. The Scotch-Irish won fame as the best Indian fighters.

The birth rate in America during the 1700's was probably higher than that of any other country. As a result of this high birth rate and increased immigration, the population of the colonies grew rapidly. It was about 250,000 in 1700, and increased to more than 1 million by 1750. The population doubled to over 2 million by 1770, and in 1775, there were nearly 2,500,000 persons in the colonies.

Population estimates made in 1770 show that the Southern Colonies had almost as many persons as New England and the Middle Colonies combined. The southern population was close to 1 million, New England's was about 571,000, and that of the Middle Colonies was about 556,000. Virginia was by far the largest colony, with over 447,000 persons. Massachusetts had more than 266,000 persons, and Pennsylvania was third, with over 240,000. Georgia, with about 23,000, had the smallest population.

As the population of the colonies increased, trade and manufacturing developed rapidly. These activities cen-

had a population of about 25,000; Boston, 16,000; Charleston, 12,000; and Newport, 11,000.

Relations With the Indians

In some places, the Indians were friendly and helped the settlers. Elsewhere, the tribes tried to drive the colonists out of lands that had been Indian hunting grounds for thousands of years. Then terrible wars broke out. For a description of the battles, see **INDIAN WARS**.

The struggles between the colonists and the Indians became large-scale warfare because of fighting between England and France. In a series of wars from 1689 to 1763, the English and French sent troops to America and battled each other for land. In these wars, many English colonists fought French colonists who had settled in Canada and the Mississippi Valley. Each side had strong supporters among the Indian tribes. For that reason, the colonists called the wars the French and Indian Wars. England won, and France lost almost all its possessions in North America. For the details of these wars, see **FRENCH AND INDIAN WARS**.

After their victory, the English recognized the claims of the Indians to the western lands that the tribes occupied. In 1763, the English issued a proclamation which prohibited American colonists from settling west



An engraving from *A Popular History of the United States*. Library of Congress
America's First Representative Legislature, the House of Burgesses, met at Jamestown in 1619. Its elected members, with the governor and council, made the laws of Virginia.

COLONIAL LIFE IN AMERICA / Society and Government

Colonial Society was made up of several classes. At the top were rich merchants and planters, and their families. They were called the "gentry" or the "better sort." The gentry lived in mansions and often traveled in comfortable carriages. The men used "Esquire" after their names, and their wives were addressed as "Madam." The gentry were well educated and included ministers, doctors, or lawyers who had attended a university.

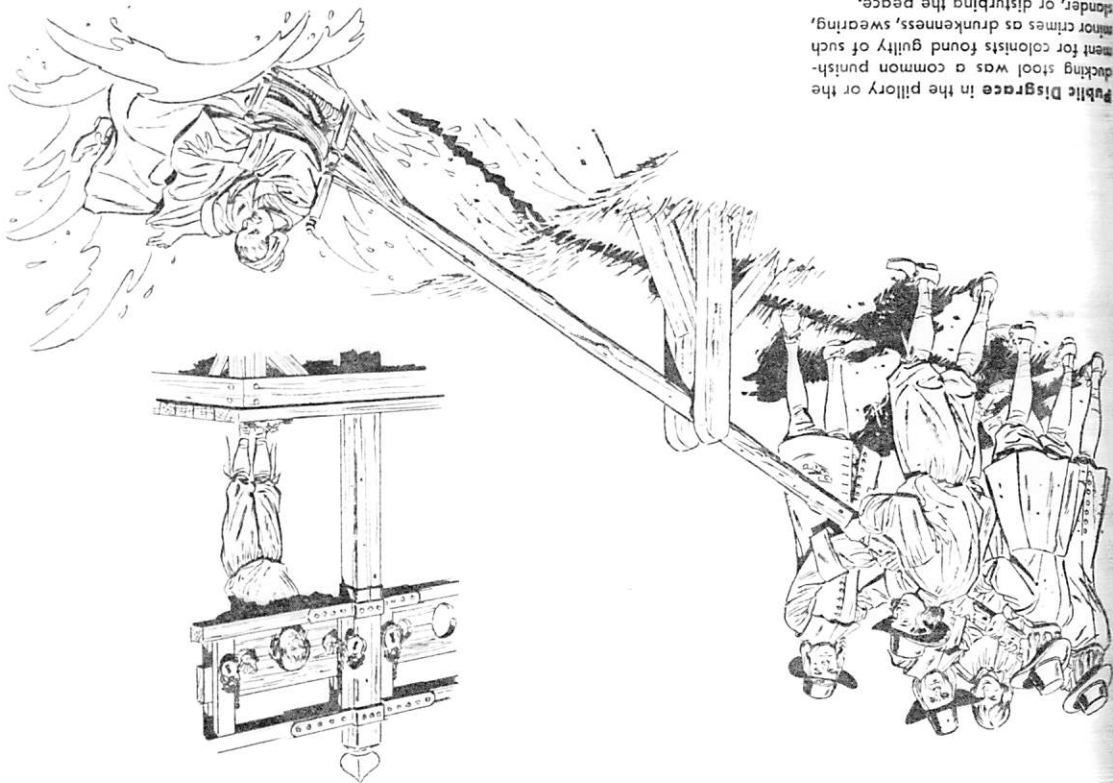
Below the gentry were members of the "middling sort." Most of them were farmers or shopkeepers who owned property but were not wealthy. Some craftworkers and teachers were included in the "middling sort." The lowest rank, called the "meaner sort," consisted of poor people, including unskilled laborers, slaves, and *indentured servants*. An indentured servant was a person who came to the colonies under a contract

wages and could invest money in property or a business.

Only slaves were forced to spend their lives at the lowest level of society. They were blacks, originally brought from Africa and sold to wealthy colonists. Slaves and their children remained slaves unless their owner freed them. But freed blacks generally found it hard to make a living. If they left home, they might be arrested as runaway slaves and sold into slavery again. They usually stayed in the neighborhood where people knew them, and worked for low wages. Most slaves worked in the Southern Colonies as farm laborers or house servants. In New England and the Middle Colonies, slaves usually worked in homes or shops.

Government. Each colony had a governor and a legislature. The king of England appointed the governor of royal colonies. In self-governing colonies, the governor

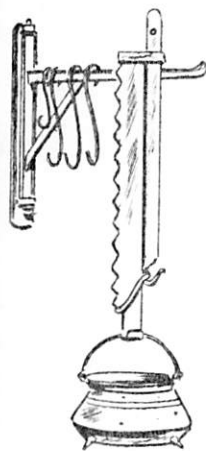
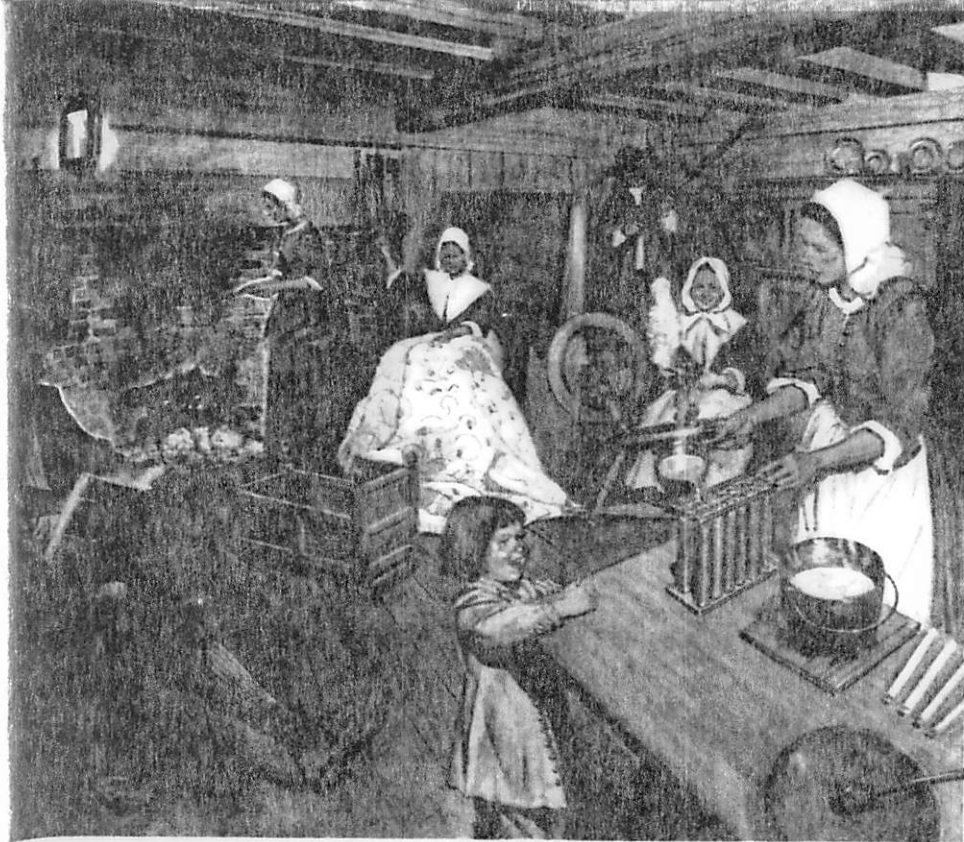
Public Disgrace in the pillory or the ducking stool was a common punishment for colonists found guilty of such minor crimes as drunkenness, swearing, disorder, or disturbing the peace.



The laws passed by a colonial legislature had to be approved by the English government. Governors appointed by the king had the responsibility of carrying out his orders. The king expected them to enforce the laws of England, especially acts of Parliament that regulated colonial trade.

Local Government in the colonies was based on English county and town governments. In the south, the country court conducted most public business. This court consisted of justices of the peace, appointed by the governor. They levied taxes, supervised road construction and ferry service, and organized the *militia* (citizen soldiers). They also tried certain civil and criminal cases. In New England, the courts only tried cases. Citizens held town meetings at which they voted on local laws and elected town officials, called selectmen. The town meeting still exists in some New England towns (see

Voting Requirements differed in the various colonies, and changed from time to time. One of the most important requirements was property ownership. By 1750, most adult male citizens who owned property could vote. Land was considered the basic property, but other possessions could be substituted for it. A tenant farmer could vote if he owned valuable livestock, or a merchant who did not own his shop could vote if he owned valuable goods. Those who could not vote included women, indentured servants, slaves, and the very poor.



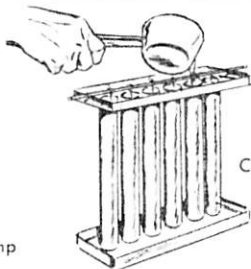
Iron cooking pot



Tinderbox



Whale oil lamp



Wooden treacher and spoons



Candle mold



Bed warmer

FARMHOUSE

Every member of the family shared in the tasks of a colonial household. The early settlers made most of their own clothing, furniture, and cooking utensils. In farmhouses throughout the colonies, the family gathered at nightfall to work in the light and warmth of the fireplace.

grandfather clock. It had a tall wooden case and stood on the floor. Other furnishings included candlesticks, chandeliers, and mirrors. The windows had heavy curtains made of brocade, damask, or linen. Floors were covered with imported carpets or colorful rugs, hand made in the home.

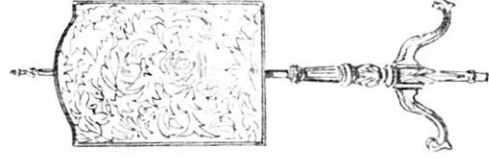
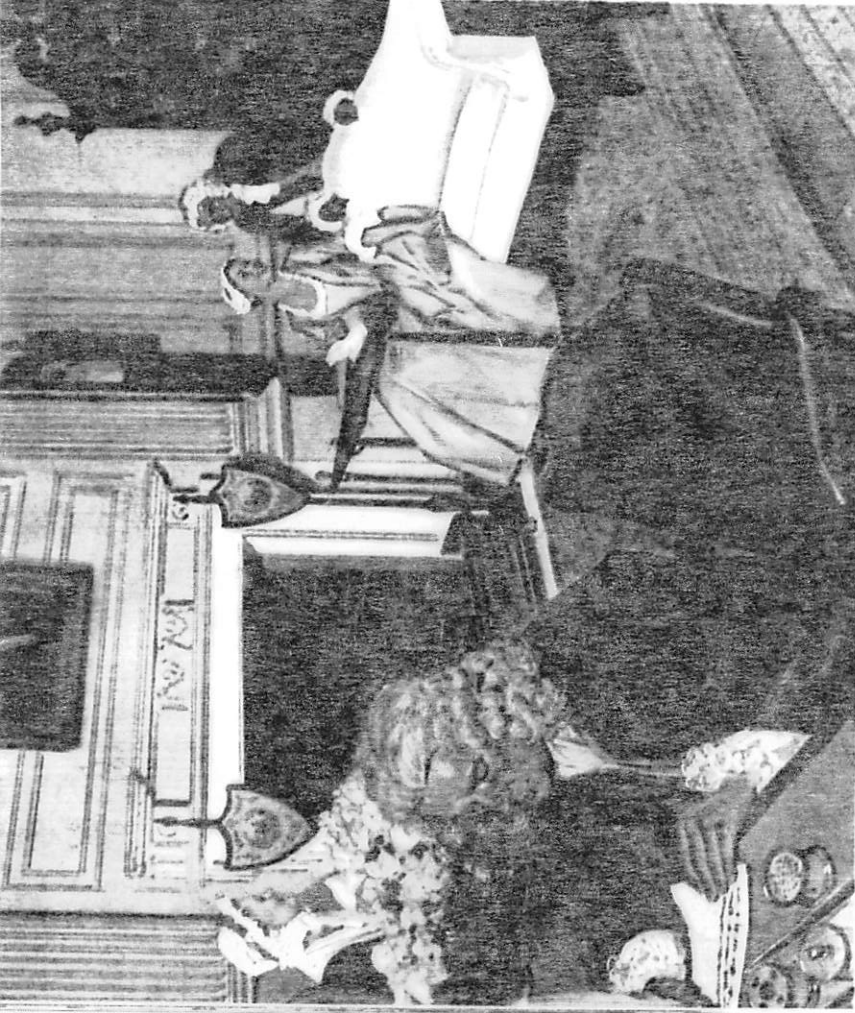
Clothing in colonial times varied according to a person's occupation or position in the community. A farmer and members of his family wore rough, homemade garments. A wealthy merchant or planter and his family had expensive clothing, made of imported materials and designed in fashionable English styles. Male servants who worked in the fields sometimes wore only breechcloths in summer.

Making clothing was an important task in most colonial households. On small farms, the women planted and tended a patch of flax, harvested the crop, spun the yarn, and wove it into linen. They wove woolen cloth

from yarn spun from the fleece of sheep. Linens and woolens were colored with dyes made from certain barks, berries, roots, or walnut hulls. The colonists tanned cowhide and deerskin, and made the leather into shoes or leggings.

In summer, workingmen wore breeches and a long linen shirt. In winter, they wore woolen or leather breeches, knitted stockings, and heavy shoes. For outdoor wear in cold weather, a man had a loose-fitting overcoat, leather leggings, woolen mittens, and a fur cap. A woman wore a dress of linen or wool, a petticoat, and a single undergarment called a shift. A cape or hooded cloak was worn outdoors. Children wore the same kind of clothes as adults.

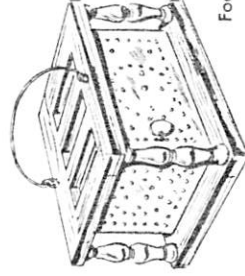
A wealthy colonist ordered fashionable clothing from London, or from a local tailor who copied the latest English styles. A typical style of the times called for close-fitting breeches of brocade, silk, or velvet, fastened



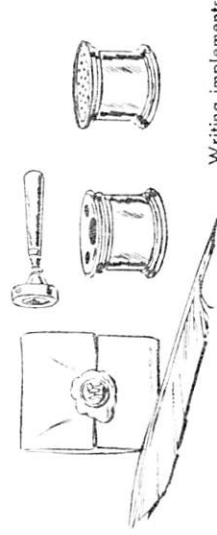
Fire screen



Spectacles



Foot stove



Writing implements

LIVING ROOM

During the 1700's, many wealthy colonists built mansions in a style known as Georgian architecture. The living room had paneled walls and a large, richly decorated fireplace. Much of the furniture of a colonial mansion was made by skilled craftsmen who copied fashionable English designs.

at the knees with silver buckles. With the breeches, a gentleman wore a white linen shirt with lace ruffles at the neck and wrists. Over the shirt, he wore a long, brightly colored waistcoat and a knee-length coat. The coat had wide, flowing sides, and was decorated with gold braid and several rows of fancy buttons. Silk hose, and shoes with silver buckles completed the costume.

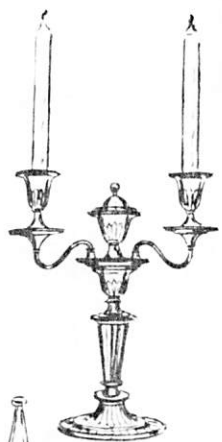
A fashionable gentleman wore a wig that he sometimes powdered white. Outdoors, he put a black *cocked hat* (a hat with the brim turned up) on top of the wig. During the late 1600's, wigs were large and expensive. A man who wore one was called a "bigwig." After 1750, many colonial men wore wigs. The most popular wig was small and resembled the wearer's natural hair. It was called a "tie" wig because a man pulled it back and tied it with a short ribbon.

Women of wealthy families wore a low-necked dress with a tight-fitting bodice, and ruffles at the elbows.

It had a full skirt, looped back to display a brightly colored embroidered petticoat. Under the dress, a hoop of steel or whalebone supported the skirt. A tightly laced corset pinched in the waist. A woman of fashion wore silk stockings and silk or leather shoes. She had several types of capes for outdoor wear.

During the 1600's, fashionable women generally wore simple hair styles. The hair was usually arranged so that a loose curl or two hung to the shoulder. Large, fancy hairdos became the fashion about 1760. Servants spent much time helping their mistress pile her hair high on a frame that she wore on her head.

Food was plentiful during most of the colonial period. After the first few years, the colonists kept themselves better supplied with food than any other people in the world. On their farms, they raised grain, cattle, hogs, sheep, chickens, fruits, and vegetables. In the fields and woodlands, they hunted deer, pigeons, squirrels, wild



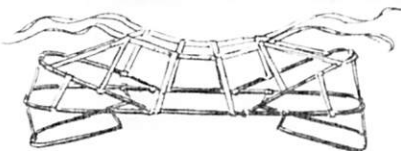
Candelabrum



Candle snuffer and wick trimmer



Wig powderer



Pannier, worn under hoop skirt

Snuffbox



Clay pipe and pipe-lighting tongs



DINING ROOM

Wealthy colonists entertained in the style of the gentry of England. They often held large dinner parties at which the guests enjoyed a wide variety of fine foods and wines. The chandelier, dishes, silverware, and table linen were all imported from London.

turkeys, and other game. From the river and ocean waters, they took clams, oysters, lobsters, and many kinds of fish.

Corn was a basic food in almost every household. The people ate it in many forms, most commonly as corn bread. A woman mixed corn meal with water or milk, salt, and lard, and shaped it into buns. Then she baked or fried the buns on a hoe or on a griddle, or placed them in the ashes of the fireplace. Corn bread had different names in various parts of colonial America—ashcake, hoecake, johnnycake, or corn pone. Cooks also made corn hominy. Sometimes they roasted ears of corn in the husks.

Rye or wheat bread was made with yeast. In many homes, the women baked these breads in a small oven that was built into the fireplace or outside the house, against the hot chimney. They also baked bread in an iron bake kettle, which had a tight-fitting lid. The kettle

stood on a bed of hot coals, with embers piled around it and on top of the lid.

Meat or game was usually cooked with vegetables into a stew. Women made the stew in a large iron pot that hung over the fire on a pothook, fastened to a crane or a chimney bar. The iron pot had short legs and sometimes was placed on a bed of coals. Whole fowl or large cuts of meat were often roasted on sharp-pointed rods called spits. Handles on the spits allowed the meat to be turned above the fire.

The colonists had difficulty storing food for the winter because they had no methods of canning or refrigeration. They salted or smoked some meats, and dried or pickled certain vegetables. Root vegetables, and such fruits as apples or pears, were kept in cool, dry cellars. As a rule, the colonists depended on bread and meat for their food during the winter.

Most families ate bread and cold meat for breakfast

colonial roads were merely paths that followed ancient Indian trails through the woodlands. The colonists widened the paths for travel on horseback, and later for carts or wagons pulled by horses or oxen. Ferries carried travelers across rivers. Most of the wooden bridges built by the colonists could be used only by foot travelers, not by vehicles. By 1760, Philadelphia had two stone bridges.

The colonists put much effort into building roads. By 1760, a person could travel by road from New Hampshire to Georgia. At about the same time, stagecoach service linked Boston with Providence, and New York City with Philadelphia and Annapolis.

By the mid-1700's, comfortable passenger vehicles were being used in the towns by government officials and wealthy colonists. These vehicles included carriages, chariots, and coaches, drawn by four, six, or eight horses; two-horse chaises, curricles, and phaetons; and one-horse "riding chairs." Many carriages had richly carved wooden sides, and seats upholstered in leather or brightly colored cloth. Brass or silver ornaments decorated the harnesses.

A Town Crier read official announcements to the townsfolk until newspapers came into general use in the mid-1700's.

Colonial Stagecoaches began operating in the mid-1700's. Taverns provided food and lodging along the way.

offices. In most towns, a town crier read official messages to the people.

Mail service operated irregularly in colonial times. Until 1700, it existed only in Massachusetts, New York, and Pennsylvania. In 1753, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania and William Hunter of Virginia were appointed to manage the colonial postal service. Under their direction, post offices were established in all the colonies, and service improved greatly.

Newspapers came into general use after the mid-1700's. The first successful American newspaper, *The Boston News-Letter*, had started publication in 1704. During the next 60 years, newspapers were published in every colony except Delaware and New Jersey.

Bettmann Archive



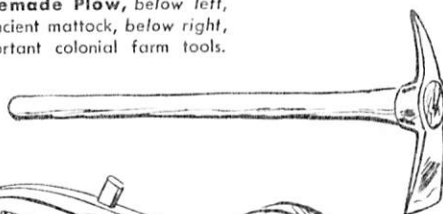
Etching of an old Pennsylvania inn by E. T. Scowcroft. Free Library of Philadelphia





Planting Corn for Food, a skill learned from the Indians, saved many early settlers from starvation.

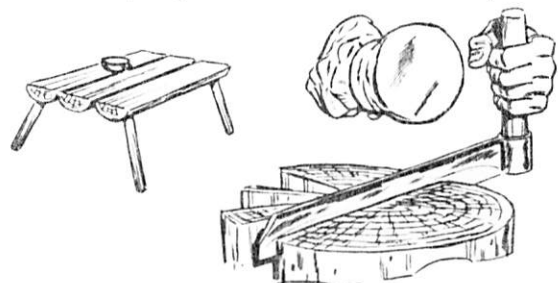
The Homemade Plow, below left, and the ancient mattock, below right, were important colonial farm tools.



The Cradle Scythe came into common use during the mid-1700's for harvesting grain on colonial farms.



The Wedge-Shaped Iron Free, a basic colonial tool, was often used to split logs into the slabs that made a sturdy table.



Throughout the colonial period, farming was most important way of making a living. Farming was survival for the first settlers. To stay alive, they had to produce food, along with materials for clothing, shelter. As their settlements grew, the colonists raised grains, tobacco, livestock, and other farm products for export. They also developed such industries as fishing and whaling, lumbering, shipbuilding, ironmaking, rum distilling, and flour milling. Colonial crafts included furniture, glassware, pottery, and metalware, pewter, iron, or silver.

Farming

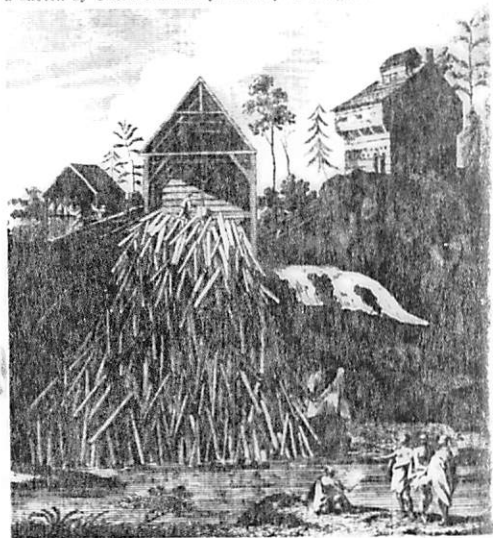
Most colonial farmers were successful because they worked hard and land was plentiful. By today's standards, colonial farming methods were wasteful. The colonists usually planted the same kind of crop repeatedly and the soil became exhausted after a few harvests. Then the farmers simply cleared more land. The most skillful farmers were the German settlers, who rotated their crops and added fertilizers to the soil. Their methods kept their land highly productive.

Tools. The colonial farmer worked mostly with simple tools, including an ax, hoe, scythe, sickle, and saw. He also had a *mattock*, a kind of pickaxe with flat blade. The farmer used his mattock to break up soil or roots. These tools were not much better than the simple ones used by the Indians. Some farmers had a homemade wooden plow. It was so heavy that several horses or oxen were required to pull it. Some farmers used tools called harrows and drags, fitted with iron teeth, to break up the soil or prepare seedbeds.

Crops. In spite of wasteful methods and poor soil, the colonial farmer was as prosperous as any farmer of his day, anywhere in the world. Even in New England with its rocky land and short growing season, a fair

Great Supplies of Lumber were produced by all the colonies. The timber was used in building homes and ships, and in making millions of barrels for colonial trade and industry.

"Colonel Philip Skene's sawmill and blockhouse, Fort Ann, N.Y." is a sketch by Thomas Anburey. Library of Congress.



l-off. He produced enough vegetables, grain, it to feed his family, and usually had extra sale.

was the most important crop of early colonial he Indians showed the first settlers how to d cultivate it, and how to grind the kernels corn meal. Farmers in all the colonies raised colonial farming developed, wheat replaced he chief grain. But farmers continued to raise ps of corn to feed their livestock.

t was the most valuable crop of the Middle Col- iere, a farmer had the advantage of excellent a highly favorable climate. The Middle Col- orted so much wheat and wheat flour that they own as the "bread colonies." These colonies orted large quantities of beef and pork to nd the West Indies.

Maryland and Virginia farmers raised food it specialized in growing tobacco. Most of the was exported to England and sold for a high til about 1750. After tobacco prices fell, some raised corn or wheat instead. Maryland and had many mills that ground grain. Much flour l were shipped to the Northern Colonies, south- pe, and the West Indies.

mers of Georgia and South Carolina devel- o important crops—rice and indigo. About : South Carolina rice growers introduced irriga- ems, which increased the size of their crops. The ant was the chief source of a blue dye. Euro- stile industries used great amounts of the dye. Southern Colonies grew some cotton, but this l not become important until after the Revolu- War. Some farmers in Pennsylvania and Vir- gan to raise flax and hemp about 1750. These s were used in making clothing and rope. They



Huge Barrels that could easily be rolled aboard a ship were used for exporting such products as rum, tobacco, or naval stores.



Making Barrels and Casks for colonial trade required the skills of men called coopers.

ing Tobacco in Vir- is illustrated by this hich appeared in a magazine of 1750. onial tobacco was ex- s English merchants.

Manufactory" from the Magazine, London; Har- brary, San Marino, Calif.

